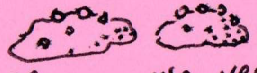
Super Adaptable Chocolate Chip Cookies

1/2 cup (4 ounces) salted butter, at room temperature
2 tablespoons sugar
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons (165 grams) packed dark brown sugar
1 large egg or flax egg (1 tablespoon of ground flaxseed with 3 tablespoons of water, mixed and let sit for 5 minutes)
1 tsp vanilla extract
3/4 tsp baking soda
Heaped 1/4 tsp salt
1 3/4 cups (220 grams) all-purpose flour
1 ½ cup (or more, or whatever) semi- or bittersweet chocolate chips or chunks

Optional:
2 tablespoons coarse/turbinado sugar (aka Sugar in the Raw), optional but really good!
¼ cup walnuts, pecans, or any nuts – chop as finely or coarsely as you desire
Sprinkles or coarse sea salt for sprinkling

Makes 24



If you use vegan butter it can be made vegan too!

(this got us through COVID egg shortages)

Heat oven to 360F and line a baking sheet with parchment.
In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugars together until very light and fluffy. Add egg or flax egg and vanilla, beating until incorporated, and scraping down the bowl as needed. Beat in salt and baking soda until combined, along with the optional nuts and turbinado sugar if using, then the flour on a low speed until just mixed. The dough will look crumbly at this point. With a spatula, fold/stir in the chocolate. Scoop cookies into 1 1/2 tablespoon mounds, spacing them apart on the prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle each with a few flakes of sea salt, or roll in sprinkles. Bake for 12 minutes, until golden on the outside but still very gooey and soft inside. Let it rest on the baking sheet at least 5 minutes to cool and harden before moving it.

A kid awarded these "best cookie ever" and gave me this rock as an award

Mushroom Risotto

First, cook the white rice. While it's still warm, quickly mix in the rice vinegar, sugar, and a half teaspoon of salt. Set it aside to cool for a bit. Rinse or wipe off dirt from the shiitake mushrooms, and cut off the stems. Chop the stems up into small pieces. Heat a small pan with some vegetable oil on the stove on medium heat. Throw in the mushroom stems, chopped leeks, garlic powder, white pepper powder, and another half teaspoon of salt. Cook until the leek and stem bits are softened. Now take a piece of plastic cling-wrap and rub a tiny bit of sesame oil on it in a circle. Pat some of the prepared rice on it forming a nice, flat circle about a quarter inch thick. Scoop a little bit of the leek and stem mixture into the center of the rice circle.
Gather up the ends of the cling wrap and TWIST! It should start to form a little rice ball. Unwrap it carefully, and place it on a plate. Repeat five more times.
Heat a pan with oil over medium heat, and add the caps from the shiitake. Add in the hoisin sauce and get the caps coated in the sauce. Move the mushrooms around for about 15-20 minutes so they're fully cooked and soft on both sides.
Top each stuffed rice ball with a shiitake cap, so they look like mushrooms with chubby stems. Optionally garnish with sesame seeds or sprouts.

Makes 6

½ cup uncooked medium or short grain white rice
1 tsp sesame oil, and some for the cling wrap
3 tablespoons rice vinegar
2 tsp sugar
1 tsp salt, divided
5 fresh shiitake mushrooms with stems
1 small leek (just the white and light green parts), chopped
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp white pepper powder
3 tablespoons hoisin sauce
Vegetable oil
Cling wrap

I submitted this to a mushroom blog about 10 years ago and got a cool mushroom encyclopedia

Tan Fingers (like dulce de leche on shortbread)

For the dough:
14 tablespoons (1 3/4 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

For the filling:
5 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 tablespoons light corn syrup
One 14-oz can sweetened condensed milk
Generous pinch of kosher salt
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 tsp rum or rum extract (optional, but nice)

Line a 9x13-inch pan with parchment.
Beat the butter with sugar, vanilla, and salt until soft and light. Fold in the flour, scraping the bowl, until the dough is smooth.
Scrape around two-thirds to three-quarters of the dough into the prepared pan--just enough to cover the bottom. Press the dough down evenly and chill at least 2 hours. Form a ball with the rest of the dough, wrap it in plastic, and either chill as well.
Once the dough is done chilling, preheat oven to 350F. As the oven preheats, pop the crust in to prebake for about 10-15 minutes, until whenever the filling is ready.
For the filling, bring the butter, corn syrup, and sweetened condensed milk to a simmer in a saucepan, stirring frequently (don't look away!). Allow the mixture to boil gently until it starts to thicken and becomes a caramel color and somewhat changes texture--it will feel thicker and fall from the spatula in globs.
Remove the dough-lined pan from the oven and spread the filling over the still-hot dough. Get the rest of the dough from the fridge or freezer, and crumble or grate it over the filling.
Bake until the filling is a deep caramel color and the dough and crumb topping are baked through, about 30 minutes.
Cool for about 10 minutes in the pan on a rack. Let it cool completely, then cut the slab into rectangles or squares.
The cookies can be kept in an air-tight container at room temperature for a couple of days.

Makes 24 depending on if you cut off the crusts and eat them before serving

My first "nice" apartment had a cookie contest for the holidays and these won. I got a disco speaker as a prize!

Three hyper-local requests:

Neighbor's husband was picked up by I.C.E. & they are struggling:

Environmental group is raising funds for legal challenge to a gravel mine expanding:

Click "Send a Comment to your legislators" for WA SB 6358-2025-26

We can de-fang Citizen's United state by state (Hawaii already did this!)

AWARD*-WINNING Recipes

*(with pictures of the awards)

AND 3 REQUESTS